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SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: UN CERTIFICATION OF ELECTION EXPLAINED

**¶1.** (U) Summary. SRSG Choi held a press conference on May 27 to counter misinformation about the UN certification of Cote d'Ivoire's election. There has been confusion among both Ivoirians and the international community about how the certification will be conducted. Choi clarified the certification process stressing that the purpose is not to seek flaws in the electoral process but to assure Ivoirians that they will have an election they can be proud of. Choi said he will keep watch to ensure that all stages of the process are carried out according to the five-criteria framework already elaborated. End Summary.

**¶2.** (U) The UN Security Council in resolution 1765 of July 16, 2007 decided that the Secretary General's Special Representative in Cote d'Ivoire (currently Y.J. Choi) shall certify that all stages of the electoral process provide the necessary guarantees for the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in accordance with international standards. The Secretary General's sixteenth progress report on UNOCI (dated April 15, 2008), laid out the five-criteria framework elaborated by the SRSG for certifying all stages of the electoral process. According to the framework, the SRSG will assess whether: 1) a secure environment exists during the period leading to the elections and allows for the full participation of the population and the candidates in the process; 2) the electoral process is inclusive; 3) all candidates have equitable access to state-controlled media and whether the latter remains neutral; 4) the electoral lists are credible and accepted by all parties; and 5) the results of the elections are determined through a transparent counting process and are accepted by all or are challenged peacefully through the appropriate channels.

**¶3.** (U) At the press conference, Choi noted that he established the five criteria in consultation with Cote d'Ivoire's political actors as well as Burkina Faso President Compaore, the Facilitator for the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA). Choi statQ.H:hat once he has certified the electoral list, he will not allow any subsequent challenges to it. Likewise, once the election results are certified, Choi said he would not allow any non-democratic challenges to the results. Choi said that the electoral process and the tallying of results must occur in a peaceful environment and that no one can be excluded from the process. The state media must be impartial and fair towards all candidates, parties, and political groups. He explained that all candidates must be given equitable access to the state-controlled media once the electoral list has been published.

**¶4.** (U) Choi said that a group of experts working in a certification cell set up at UNOCI will continuously evaluate the electoral process. If problems are brought to his attention, Choi said he would first encourage the relevant parties to take the measures necessary to correct the situation. If that does not resolve the problem, he will engage with leading Ivoirian actors to identify national solutions. If that fails, he will ask the OPA Facilitator to

arbitrate. If that also fails, he will refer the matter to the UN Security Council. Choi promised to utilize all measures at his disposal to ensure that the election results are accepted and that the victor is the person who actually won the election.

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